

many thousands of school buildings and facilities across the United States are in dire need of renovation or replacement. In my State of Iowa alone, according to a recent study, some 79 percent of public schools need to be upgraded or repaired. The harsh reality is that the average age of school buildings in the United States is nearly 50 years.

Too often, our children visit ultra-modern shopping malls and gleaming sports arenas on weekends but during the week go to school in rundown or antiquated facilities. This sends exactly the wrong message to our young people about our priorities. We have to do better.

That is why I am deeply grateful to the professionals and parents in the Martensdale-St. Marys Community School District. There is no question that a quality public education for every child is a top priority in that community. I salute them and wish them a very successful new school year.●

NEW LONDON COMMUNITY EDUCATION

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, in Iowa and across the United States, a new school year has begun. As you know, Iowa public schools have an excellent reputation nationwide, and Iowa students' test scores are among the highest in the Nation.

I would like to take just a few minutes today to salute the dedicated teachers, administrators, and school board members in the New London Community School District, and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

This fall marks the 10th year of the Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program. That is its formal name, but it is better known among educators in Iowa as the program of Harkin grants for Iowa public schools. Since 1998, I have been fortunate to secure a total of \$121 million for the State government in Iowa, which selects worthy school districts to receive these grants for a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools or renovating existing facilities. The Federal grant has made it possible for the district to provide quality and safe schools for their students.

The New London Community School District received several Harkin fire safety grants totaling \$100,000 which it used to make extensive upgrades to school facilities. The grants enabled the district to upgrade electrical wiring, install emergency lighting and make other safety repairs. The Federal grants have made it possible for the district to provide quality and safe schools for their students.

Excellent schools do not just pop up like mushrooms after a rain. They are the product of vision, leadership, per-

sistence, and a tremendous amount of collaboration among local officials and concerned citizens. I salute the entire staff, administration, and governance in the New London Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—president Laurie Hempen, vice president Bob McPherson, Dennis Carter, Kelly Kadel, and Joel Prottsman, and former members, Virginia Ekstrand, Sid Schmitt, Rhonda Mixon, David Gates, and Gary Schweitzer. I would also like to recognize superintendent Chuck Reighard, former superintendent Robert Cardoni, and former board secretary Nancy Blow.

As we mark the 10th anniversary of the Harkin school grant program in Iowa, I am obliged to point out that many thousands of school buildings and facilities across the United States are in dire need of renovation or replacement. In my State of Iowa alone, according to a recent study, some 79 percent of public schools need to be upgraded or repaired. The harsh reality is that the average age of school buildings in the United States is nearly 50 years.

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OSKALOOSA COMMUNITY EDUCATION

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, in Iowa and across the United States, a new school year has begun. As you know, Iowa public schools have an excellent reputation nationwide, and Iowa students' test scores are among the highest in the Nation.

I would like to take just a few minutes today to salute the dedicated teachers, administrators, and school board members in the Oskaloosa Community School District, and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

This fall marks the 10th year of the Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program. That is its formal name, but it is better known among educators in Iowa as the program of Harkin grants for Iowa public schools. Since 1998, I have been fortunate to secure a total of \$121 million for the State government in Iowa, which selects worthy school districts to receive these grants for a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire safety systems to building

new schools or renovating existing facilities. In many cases, this Federal funding is used to leverage public and/or private local funding, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect in a local school district.

The Oskaloosa Community School District received a 2000 Harkin grant totaling \$500,000 which it used to help build an addition to and remodel classrooms in the high school building. The addition doubled the amount of classroom space available to students and greatly improved their learning environment. This school is a modern, state-of-the-art facility that befits the educational ambitions and excellence of this school district. Indeed, it is the kind of school facility that every child in America deserves. The district also received a 1999 fire safety grant, totaling \$62,000, which was used to purchase smoke detectors and emergency lighting in several buildings.

Excellent schools do not just pop up like mushrooms after a rain. They are the product of vision, leadership, persistence, and a tremendous amount of collaboration among local officials and concerned citizens. I salute the entire staff, administration, and governance in the Oskaloosa Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—president David Meinert, vice-president Don Patterson, Laurie Palmer, John Grahek, Anne Whitis, Lin Yoder, and Jon Denniston, and former members Patrick Sodak, Bruce Smith, David Dickinson, and Brian Keefer. I would also like to recognize Superintendent Dr. Carolyn McGaughey, retired principal Mike Christensen, and board secretary Chad Vink.

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